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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 14.7.2016

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 14 JULY 2016

COUNCILLORS: Derek Levy (Chair), Abdul Abdullahi, Katherine Chibah
PRESENT (Vice-Chair), Nneka Keazor, Joanne Laban and Edward Smith.

STATUTORY Mr Tony Murphy (Catholic diocese representative)
CO-OPTES Mr Simon Goulden (other faiths/denominations representative), 1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative), Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor representative) – *Italics Denotes absence*

OFFICERS: James Rolfe (Director of Finance, Resources and Customer Services), Ian Davis (Director Regeneration & Environment), Rocco Labellarte (AD ICT, Finance, Resources and Customer Services), Paul Kearsey (AD, Transformation), Madeleine Forster (Housing Programme Manager), Dr Allison Duggal (Public Health Consultant) Andy Ellis and Elaine Huckell (Scrutiny)

Also Attending: Councillor Georgiou (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Public Service Delivery) and Councillor Lemonides (Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency),

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WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Kayah Taylor and Asiya Warsame (Enfield Youth Parliament) and Alicia Meniru.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Laban stated that her brother was a Headteacher at a Primary Academy (Free School). Councillors Abdullahi and Smith also referred to their positions as School Governors.

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SELECTION OF NEW WORKSTREAMS FOR 2016/17 AND 2017/18

James Rolfe updated the Committee on the Enfield 2017 programme. He introduced Paul Kearsey as the AD for Transformation and Rocco Labellarte

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as AD for ICT . He referred to the three main areas of forthcoming work for the team

- Finishing the job – this refers to projects that are to be completed in next few months and would include technology projects, aiming to ensure the new hubs are providing a good level of service to customers.
- Getting the Basics Right – this involves taking stock of what has been done and ensuring existing transformation principles and approach to delivering services are in place
- Building on New Foundations – moving forward on what has been delivered, to engage with staff, partners and customers to refine the way services are delivered

He said austerity is likely to continue whilst expectations continue to rise. Our systems need to ensure correct outcomes are achieved and that we can resolve customers' issues with the minimum of bureaucracy. We would continue to fully engage with our staff, to prioritise needs and fully utilize the resources available. He referred to the need to show the ROI, (Return of Investment) of new systems and the benefit to the community. Over the next six months a lot of work is to be done to ensure the website is fully functional - this would include the new artificial intelligence platform 'Amelia', which is being developed to answer general queries coming to the website. The new telephony system would also be going 'live'.

The following issues were then raised -

Councillor Smith said the report was helpful and he spoke of existing customer care issues that had been raised at the Council meeting the previous evening. He would be leading on a new 'Enfield 2017' Scrutiny Workstream, and stated that he considered there were three key points for this group to focus on -

- project management up to the point the system went live
- the provision of assistance for people using the new 'hubs'.
- a financial analysis would be required on the 'Return of Investment'.

Councillor Levy asked if the staff changes in the team had inhibited the project or had it moved forward as had been hoped? James Rolfe answered that he did not think these changes had affected the delivery of outcomes.

When asked if any lessons had been learnt from the first phase of the project, and if there had there been any unforeseen problems. James Rolfe answered that there had been a number of issues to be resolved but this was to be expected from the introduction of complex new technology. In future it would be important to bring in changes at the right pace so that they became fully embedded and staff and customers were confident in using them.

Councillor Laban asked when the new website would be fully operational?

An answer was given that this would be rolled out over the next few months. Although the final date for the new website to be fully operational had not yet been decided. A 'soft launch' has been held - the emphasis is on engagement with a few people at a time to ensure they are fully aware of

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systems and their 'project user acceptance' has been given. The system/ website is aimed to be quicker and more responsive, there would be more links i.e directly through 'Google search'. We would then gradually lose the old links. The new pages would be systematically 'tried out' and the old pages decommissioned.

It was confirmed that 'software testing' had been taking place over a long period and this would continue. The Council would also be ensuring that people who use systems are involved in the testing process— There is also now a clear business owner of each area/ process who is engaged in the project to ensure the IT does what is needed.

Councillor Chibah referred to Members Enquiries and whether it will be possible to keep track of issues such as 'flytipping' on the system. James Rolfe confirmed that there will be a Portal (a members App) for members to use and we are currently working on the roll-out of this facility.

Concerns were expressed for members of the public who may not be aware of this transitional process. Councillor Smith asked if it was possible to provide some dialogue boxes on the website to inform them of changes. Confirmation was given that messaging/ signposting would be happening. James Rolfe also spoke of the new 'web chat' window that would enable customers to speak directly to a member of staff who would be able to 'load-up' pages for them. This service is currently being refined to improve the customer's experience.

Councillor Levy asked how the new telephony system would be introduced and what could be done to prevent problems occurring at this time. It was answered that the old system would not just be turned off and the other switched on, instead there will be a controlled move between the two systems. When everyone is comfortable that everything is working as it should, then the move over to the new system would happen. This is likely be on a Thursday afternoon so any problems could be rectified before the weekend.

Call handlers will be trained to use the new system, which will be an improved service and would enable details of a caller to be found immediately. The public would be able to see a real difference with the new website and would experience an improved service with the telephony system.

Councillor Laban asked for an assurance, and this was given, that the new telephony system would not be introduced until all relevant staff had been fully trained.

Councillor Levy referred to the Scrutiny Workstream on 'Quality of Communication' and how this may link with the new ICT services being introduced as part of Enfield 2017. It was confirmed that we were looking at a systems based/ consolidated approach to ensure all areas are correctly linked up and a good customer service is provided.

Officers were thanked for their presentation and it was asked that a further update be provided at a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny in November.

AGREED

It was agreed that an update on Enfield 2017 be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November.

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HOUSING REPAIRS UPDATE

Madeleine Forster (Housing Programme Manager) gave an update on performance in relation to the Repairs and Maintenance Contracts.

It was noted that a Scrutiny Workstream on this subject has been established and would be led by Councillor Chibah.

Madeleine Forster highlighted the following:

- Mobilisation of the new Repairs and Maintenance contracts began last year and although there have been some areas of unsatisfactory performance, we are beginning to see improvements by contractors. The data for May shows that performance is moving from 'red' towards an 'amber' service.
- The first year of the contracts for 2015/16 represented a reduction of £1 million from the 2014/15 budget and there had been further budget savings of £1.75m on the contracts for the year.
- Targets are set at the upper quartile level, and although this is correct, it does place a demanding expectation on contractors
- There had been a range of initiatives to engage with the contractors during the year including intensive contract management, and holding regular meetings and workshops. From the beginning of May 2016 contract penalties had been implemented.
- For Voids work, the team had to source alternative non-term contractors through the London Tender Portal last year. This followed unsatisfactory performance by the term contractors. There has been a phased reintroduction of voids work to the term contractors to enable them to remobilise effectively. Performance for this work is now much improved.
- Contract penalties include the issuing of defect notices. The contract states that if 25 notices are issued this can trigger the removal of an area of work from the contractor. Working through this issues it is apparent that the design of the penalty structure means that disproportionate penalties could be implemented, for example if work is carried out on only one void and this is ranked as unsatisfactory, it would be classed as a 100% failure. This would result in 95 defect notices and thus may lead on to the removal of work from the contractor. It was thought this did not properly reflect the intention of the original contract and that penalty/ defect notices should be re-examined.

Madeleine Forster referred to future proposals. She said it is intended that existing targets should remain and financial penalties be imposed.. However we may look to recalibrate the existing penalty structure. Meetings would be

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held with the managing directors of contractors, following discussions with Councillor Oykenor and Councillor Smith.

The following issues were raised

Councillor Chibah questioned whether in some emergency cases penalties were severe enough. She spoke of an instance where a mother of young children had to vacate a property because of the need to carry out emergency repairs to a boiler, this may have resulted in her technically being made 'homeless'. Councillor Chibah also referred to work that is carried out by sub-contractors and the difficulties for residents in determining who is responsible. Madeleine Forster said there were many instances of sub-contracting in this industry. She stated that the main contractor is responsible for the performance of their sub-contractors and that this would be raised at the meetings with the Directors. She agreed that the balance of penalties does need to be examined to check if they are too onerous or not onerous enough. It was confirmed that we had a 4 hour timescale for emergencies and Ian Davis stated that we had a 100% performance on gas safety testing.

Councillor Laban did not consider the level of penalties was sufficiently high for the present service. Financial penalties can range from under £100 to over £1000. Madeleine Forster did not think the service currently provided by contractors would necessarily be assessed as poor - she thought that we might cause more problems for ourselves if defect notices resulted in the removal of work from contractors.

An issue was raised about the monitoring of customer service calls relating to contractors work outside working hours. It was also asked if comparative data could be provided from other Local Authorities.

ACTION: Madeleine Forster

Councillor Smith commented that it seems that the procurement process was flawed when we were appointing contractors and he said it now appears that the penalty notice system is flawed. Madeleine Forster denied that then procurement process was flawed. Ian Davis referred to the different ways that contracts of this nature are structured and suggested that it may be useful to look at the way other Local Authorities had designed their contracts.

In answer to a question about who would be responsible for providing a remedy should there be damage to a property, it was confirmed that regardless of the cause of the damage, Enfield's relationship is with the main contractor and they would be pursued to address the issue themselves or via their sub-contractor.

Councillor Levy spoke of leaseholder tenants work. An example he gave was work being undertaken in Bycullah Road, leaseholder tenants had received large maintenance bills, some in the region of £20K. Covering this area is a company who are below target on the 'quality of works' and 'customer satisfaction'. He asked how we can ensure that residents get value for money.

Confirmation was given that we oversee this and over 90% of customers are happy with the service provided.

The next time this item comes before OSC will be when the final report of the Workstream is presented. Without pre-empting the content and outcome of the report, it would be useful to have an updated version of the performance summary presented with it.

AGREED That a further update on Housing Maintenance contracts be submitted to OSC in conjunction with the final report of the Housing Repairs Workstream.

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FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION UPDATE

A report was presented by Dr Allison Duggal on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Enfield, Health Needs Assessment – a Statistical Study.

Councillor Laban introduced this item. She said that from her experience the sharing of information across European states about FGM was poor. She welcomed the report and was pleased that this issue was being taken forward. She stressed that we needed to know whether these issues were being detected in schools and whether we were keeping girls safe in the borough.

Dr Allison Duggal highlighted the following:

- The report estimates the number of girls and young women at risk of FGM in Enfield. The methodology used for the statistical study was previously used by LB Islington.
- The reason that Enfield shows a high prevalence to FGM is because of the diverse make-up of the borough.
- The number of girls at risk of FGM in Enfield is 1144 – this is for girls who come from communities where there is near-universal FGM prevalence.

The following issues were raised:

Councillor Laban said she was shocked at the numbers given, and thought we needed to look at how the school service can be used to help target this problem. Allison Duggal provided an update which included an 'Action plan'. This gave details of a mapping exercise to be undertaken, and it also referred to work to be undertaken with schools.

Councillor Keazor said the report referred to girls being taken back to their country of origin during the summer school holidays for FGM to be carried out. She asked if any measures had been taken leading up to the end of the school term to prevent this from happening.

It was confirmed that leaflets had been prepared. The Department of Health had prepared a video aimed at African communities. The video refers to the

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harm of FGM to girls and covers the legal provisions around this issue. It also sets out the facts showing that no religion supports this practice.

Councillor Abdullahi said it was important that some of the smaller organisations are involved in mapping exercises. He thought people were now more aware that FGM was not a 'religious duty'.

Councillor Smith spoke of the necessity for Government and Local Authorities to take a positive stance against this practice and asked how many prosecutions had been made.

Allison stated that there has only been mandatory reporting of FGM by Police and Social Services since October 2015. From the data received, 11 young people who had been born in this country had been referred to Police. There has been one failed prosecution case so far, but authorities were now hopeful of a high profile prosecution.

Councillor Chibah said she thought schools were crucial in trying to combat FGM. In the school where she teaches the Head teacher has taken a proactive approach with concerted preventative action. Teachers need to look at families where there may be risks. She thought schools should be prioritised, however she queried what would happen if a school was not under local authority control such as an Academy.

It was confirmed that all Safeguarding issues are covered by the local authority including school nursing services. It was agreed that schools should be prioritised and it was thought we ought to concentrate more on Primary Schools. This should include social workers, teachers and all appropriate professionals including CCG's (Clinical Commissioning Groups).

It was asked if the physical and mental health pressures resulting from FGM on the NHS was quantifiable/ trackable. Allison referred to a clinic at North Middlesex Hospital that has been established with the help of colleagues from LB Haringey to help adult older women (approx. 3500) who have been affected by FGM.

Women are referred to the clinic through the midwifery service. It is funded by the CCG (NHS) for this financial year, but we need to ensure there is funding for this in future. Information on findings/ results from the clinic has been requested by Allison and this should be available in the next few weeks. Allison Duggal said she would be leaving the service shortly and thanked Members for their interest and mentioned her concerns for this work to continue and its future funding.

Members thanked Allison for her report.

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SCHOOL PLACES SCRUTINY WORKSTREAM- FINAL REPORT

Councillor Chibah, as Chair of the School Places Scrutiny Work stream, introduced the report. The Work Stream was set up to look at the provision of school places in the borough to examine how the local authority ensures that

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both current and future demand is met for primary, secondary and special schools.

She highlighted the following:

- This is a complex area with huge pressures on Enfield as a result of demographic changes in the borough and also legislative changes.
- It was reassuring to see the work that is being done by the Education service which has to keep a fine balance between under and over - capacity in schools.
- An area of concern for schools is the high rise in the number of cases of pupils with autism. It is not known why this is happening she supported a national request for research into why the substantial increase in autism is being seen. There are pressures on special school places as a result of this increase. Additional provision for children with autism in the borough is being progressed.
- Although we work with Central Government when planning for school places, the new school academies can be set up without local authority agreement. We need to ensure that information is shared with other boroughs and that discussions are held with Government in an effort to make this process more workable.
- Visits took place to different school academies and it was apparent that whilst one of the academies had a good/positive connection with the council, another academy did not have this good relationship. It is important that positive connections are maintained with academies as far as possible.

Members thanked Councillor Chibah for her update and for the very thorough report. There will be a further opportunity for the Committee to look at the issues raised following further discussions with the Cabinet Member and Director.

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AGENDA PLANNING

AGREED

The Work Programme for 2016/17 was tabled and agreed at the meeting. It would be submitted to the Council meeting in September. Additional items can be included in the Work Programme for consideration should this be necessary.

It was suggested that it may be useful for papers to be circulated and questions asked before the meeting.

The following subjects to be included on the Work Programme:

- A further update report on Enfield 2017 is to be discussed at the November 2016 meeting

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- The Council's Housing Allocations Policy is in the process of being reviewed, it was suggested that Councillor Oykenner be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss this issue, as pre-decision scrutiny.
- A subject on 'Agenda Planning' to be included on each agenda to decide items for consideration, this may include an item on 'Local Plan Review'
- An item on FGM to be considered at the Health Scrutiny Standing Work stream in 2017/18.
- Housing Benefit – (including appeals claims) to be considered as an additional item on the Work Programme.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 MAY 2016

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2016 were **AGREED**

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DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of future meetings were **NOTED**.

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EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS & PUBLIC

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